



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العلمين، والصلاة والسلام على رسوله الكريم، أما بعد:

The Consensus and Continuous Practice of the Ummah Upon 20 Rakaat Taraweeh

It is a Sunnah Muakaddah (emphasized Sunnah) and the continuous practice of the people of the Khair al Quroon (best of times) i.e., the Sahabah, Tabi'oon and Tab'a al Tabi'een ﷺ to perform 20 rakaats Taraweeh from the sighting of the crescent of Ramadhan up to the sighting of the crescent of Shawaal (i.e., during the entire month of Ramadhan). This is unanimously agreed upon by the Ummah of Nabi Muhammed ﷺ.

Malik al 'Ulema (the King of Scholars) 'Allamah Abu Bakr al Kasani ﷺ states: '[Sayyiduna] 'Umar ﷺ assembled the Companions ﷺ of Rasul al Allah ﷺ in the month of Ramadhan behind [Sayyiduna] Ubay ibn Ka'ab ﷺ and he led them in 20 rakaats every night, and no Companion had objected against him. Thus, this will be considered a consensus of the Sahabah ﷺ upon 20 rakaats Taraweeh salah. (*Bada'i al Sana'i*)

Muwaffaq ibn Qudamah al Hanbali ﷺ writes: This is like 'Ijma'a (i.e., 20 rakaats Taraweeh is the stance of the majority of scholars and it is the consensus of the Ummah). (see: *al Mughni* 1:835. P. Beirut)

Consensus of the Four Imams and the Majority of Scholars Upon 20 Rakaats Taraweeh

A large body of the seniors of the Ummah, inclusive of Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam al Shafi'ee and Imam Ahmed ﷺ unanimously agree upon 20 rakaats Taraweeh as can be understood from their books of Fiqh (Jurisprudence). The consensus of the Four Imams ﷺ is evidence that the practice of 20 rakaats Taraweeh is a successive authentic transmission from the predecessors of the Ummah. Hence, below are the texts from the books of Jurisprudence (concerning 20 rakaats Taraweeh):

The Mazhab of the Ahnaaf

'Allamah Shurumbulaali ﷺ states in Maraqi al Falah: 'Taraweeh is 20 rakaats by the consensus of the Sahabah r.a.' (*Maraaqi al Falah* p: 160. Also see: *Shaami* v: 2).

The Mazhab of the Maalikiyah

Qadhi Abu al Waleed ibn Rushd al Qurtubi ؒ states: ‘There is a difference of opinion concerning the amount of rakaats of Taraweeh during the month of Ramadhan. Imam Malik, in one of his two opinions, as well as Abu Hanifah, al Shafi’ee, Ahmed and Dawood ؒ state that the rakaats are 20, besides the 3 rakaats of Witr. Abu al Qasim ؒ narrates from Imam Malik ؒ that he (Malik ؒ) would also approve of 36 rakaats [of Taraweeh], and 3 rakaats of Witr’. (*Bidayah al Mujtahid* 1:152. P. Dar Nashr al Kutub al Islamiyah). This means that Imam Malik ؒ had two opinions concerning the rakaats of Taraweeh, one opinion was 20 rakaats and the second was 36 rakaats. (see also: *Hashiyah al Dasooqi* 1:291. P. Misr).

The Mazhab of the Shafi’eeyah

It is mentioned in Mughni al Muhtaaj: ‘It [Taraweeh Salah] is 20 Rakaats with 10 Salams, during every night of the month of Ramadhan, because of the narration reported by al Bayhaqi ؒ with an authentic chain of transmission which states that they [i.e., the Sahabah ؓ] would perform 20 Rakaats in the month of Ramadhan during the reign of Sayyiduna ‘Umar ؓ’ (*Mughni al Muhtaaj* 1:460.)

Imam Nawawi ؒ states in Sharh al Muhathab: ‘Our Mazhab concerning Taraweeh is that it is 20 Rakaats with 10 salams, besides the Witr Salah. This adds up to 5 Tarweehaat. Each Tarweehah is 4 rakaats with 2 salams. This is our Madhab and also the opinion of Abu Hanifah and his followers, Ahmed and Dawood etc ؒ. Al Qadhi ‘Iyadh ؒ narrates that this is reported from the majority of Scholars’. (*Sharh al Muhathab* 4:32. P. Dar al Fikr)

The Mazhab of the Hanabilah

Hafiz Ibn Qudamah al Hanbali ؒ writes: ‘The preferred verdict of Imam Abu ‘Abd Allah [Ahmed ibn Hanbal] ؒ concerning the Taraweeh prayers is that it is 20 rakaats. This is also the verdict of Thawri, Abu Hanifah, al Shafi’ee ؒ. Imam Malik ؒ said it is 36 rakaats. (*al Mughni* 1:834)

Imam al Tirmithi ؒ also narrates 20 rakaats from the four Imams. Hence, he states: ‘Most of the Scholars’ practice is upon that which is narrated from ‘Ali ؓ, ‘Umar ؓ and other Companions ؓ that the Taraweeh prayer is 20 rakaats. This is also the opinion of Sufyaan al Thawri, Ibn al Mubarak and al Shafi’ee ؒ. Al Shafi’ee ؒ said: ‘And this is how I encountered the people of our city, Makkah, performing 20 rakaats Taraweeh. (*Jam’i al Tirmithi* 1:166. *Abwaab al Saum*. P. Qadimi)

Following the Madhab of the Four Imams is following the al Sawaad al A’azam (the main body of the Muslim Ummah) and breaking away from the Four Imams is breaking away from the al Sawaad al A’azam (the main body of the Muslim Ummah).

Shah Waliyyullah al Dehlawi ؒ wrote: ‘Rasul Allah ﷺ said: ‘Follow the al Sawaad al A’azam (the main body of the Muslim Ummah)’. And since the true Mazhahib became extinct, except these Four Mazhahib, following them will be considered as following the main body of the Muslim Ummah, and breaking away from them will be tantamount to breaking away from the main body of the Muslim Ummah’. (*Iqd al Jeed* p: 56).

One Completion of the Quran in the Taraweeh is a Sunnah Muakkadah

It is crystal clear from the quotes of the Sahabah ؓ, Tabi’oon ؓ and the texts of the Jurists that one completion of the entire Quran during the Taraweeh salah is a Sunnah Muakkadah. It should not be less than that.

Also, it is impermissible to look in the Quran and perform the Taraweeh salah according to the Hanafi Mazhab. This will nullify the salah according to Imam Abu Hanifah ؓ. Sayyiduna ‘Umar ؓ prohibited that the Taraweeh salah be led whilst looking into the Quran. This is also the opinion of Saeed ibn al Musayyib, Hasan al Basri, Mujahid, Ibrahim and Sulayman ibn al Hanzalah ؓ. (see: *al Asl of Imam Muhammed* 1: 206 and *Mughni of Ibn Qudamah* 1:411)

For more details, texts of the Jurists and narrations of the Sahabah ؓ, please refer to Fatawa Darul ‘Uloom Zakariyya 2:488-493.

Allah alone knows best.

Prepared by: (Mufti) Muhammed Ilyas Sheikh

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